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REVIEWS

The Mulatto in the United States. By EDWARD BYRON REUTER. Boston: Badger, 1918. Pp. 417. $2.50.

The case of the everlasting negro again intrudes itself on public attention in the form of a scientific treatise upon the mulatto in the United States. The author has brought together much interesting and valuable material bearing upon mixed-blood races in all parts of the world.

At the outset the author informs us that his treatise deals "with the sociological consequences of race intermixture, not with the biological problem of the intermixture itself." The mulatto in the United States has no sociological status; the Eurasian, the half-caste product between the European and the Hindu, constitutes a *tertium quid*, an outcast by both parent types. But the mulatto in the United States is socially stratified with the mother-race. His case constitutes one of ethnological interest rather than of sociological significance. The three most conspicuous Englishmen produced by the world-war are Lord Kitchener, an Irishman, General Haig, a Scotchman, and Lloyd George, a Welshman. No comparable names have arisen of purely English blood, but the basal English idea predominates, and the racial identity of these illustrious names has not the slightest sociological importance. Moses, the renowned leader of the Israelites, might have been Egyptian, but it was his mighty works rather than incident of blood that counts through all the years. In the United States all negroid elements of whatever blood composition are forced into one social class by outside compulsion. The quantum of different bloods coursing through the veins of distinguished individuals in this class is, practically speaking, a sociological negligibility. The author is, therefore, discussing a theory which he eagerly advocates rather than a condition that actually exists.

The scientific pretension of this treatise is vitiated by the vagueness of fundamental definition. The word mulatto is used as "a general term to include all negroes of mixed ancestry regardless of the degree of intermixture." This definition is not only unscientific but practically meaningless. A careful observation of negro schools, churches, and miscellaneous gatherings in all parts of the country convinces the reviewer

that three-fourths of the negro race have some traceable measure of white blood in their veins. It is, therefore, not the least surprising that practically all eminent negroes in the different walks of life are classified as mulattoes. One is reminded of a famous historian who proved conclusively that the Caucasian race alone had made valuable contributions to civilization by claiming that all people who had made such contributions were Caucasians. At the expense of great labor and pains, the author has analyzed numerous lists of eminent negroes and by some unexplained process has separated the mulattoes from the blacks. Frederick Douglas tells us that genealogical trees did not flourish among slaves. It is indeed a wise negro who knows his own ancestry. Any negro can claim some degree of mixed blood without successful refutation. There is no scientific test of blood composition. The utter worthlessness of his classification is disclosed by a casual selection of four consecutive names arranged in alphabetical order on page 206. Monroe N. Work, R. R. Wright, Sr., R. R. Wright, Jr., and Charles Young are classified as mulattoes. Both in color and negroid characteristics these names would rank below the average of the entire negro race. To rank Nannie Burroughs and Mrs. C. J. Walker as mulattoes certainly evokes a smile. When William Pickens and Colonel Charles Young are so described, the smile breaks into uncontrollable laughter.

The treatise is evidently based upon preconceived theory and purpose. The undiluted negro element is supposed to accept with satisfaction the status of inferiority, and the mulatto, who is lower than white and higher than black, would or should dominate the lower section of the biracial division, but must not so much as lift up his eyes to the higher world of white opportunity and dominion. The author is unable to control his temper in denouncing the attitude of the northern mulatto because he insists upon a platform of equality.

The provincial spirit of the author is everywhere portrayed. His range of vision is limited to southern bias and tradition. He fails to grasp the universal human impulse. Julius Caesar tells us that all men hate slavery and love liberty. The negro is no more satisfied with servility than the poor is with poverty, the ignorant with his ignorance, or the sick with his disease. Seeming hopelessness of relief causes the unfortunate to sink into slothful yielding to an unfortunate lot apparently unescapable.

The normal human passion yearns for freedom and equality. The negro forms no exception. The most picturesque and spectacular

efforts put forth by the enslaved African in the Western world were under the marshalship of Touissant L'Overture, Denmark Versey, and Nat Turner, leaders of undiluted negro blood.

The author really proposes a triracial rather than a biracial division. The utter impracticability of this scheme would be found in the impossibility of identifying the so-called mulatto class. The mixed race always represents physical instability. I have known twin brothers who were so diverse in racial characteristics that the one easily crossed the color line and withheld all recognition from his brown brother who could not follow whither he went.

The dual caste system is undemocratic and un-Christian enough; to add a third would be inexcusable compounding of iniquity.

The first fruit of contact of two races of ethnic or cultural diversity is a composite progeny. There exists no biological dead line. Social custom and priestly sanction have never been able to control the cosmic urge to multiply and replenish the earth. The sons of God in their supercilious security never fail to look lustfully upon the daughters of men, while shielding their own females from the embrassure of the lower order of males. The composite progeny is generally the offspring of the male of the stronger race and the female of the weaker race. There is no discovered race repugnance or antipathy when it comes to the fundamental principles of reproduction. Political pronouncements, religious inhibition, social proscription, operate only upon the controlled sex. The first laws regulating slave relations were made to prevent intermarriages of negro males and white females. In the long run it makes no difference whether the races are mixed through the relation of the higher male and the lower female or by the reverse process. The social stigma against the bastard progeny dies out with the third and fourth generation. Intermingling of Norman and Saxon took place largely through bastardization, which has not the slightest influence or effect upon the pride of the Anglo-Saxon today.

The Germanic races advocate a brotherhood of blood rather than of culture. Other sections of the white race show less racial intolerance. In the one case the offspring is made to follow the status of the mother and in the other that of the father. The effect of the one is to mix the lower race by keeping the upper race pure, while that of the other is the reverse.

We see the contrasted effect of these wide-apart policies in Richmond, Virginia, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The mulatto in the United States received every initiatory advantage over his black half-brother.

He had the sympathy of his father-master. In many instances he was educated and sent to the free states where he would have a man's chance. Hon. John M. Langston recounts in his autobiography the paternal regards of his white father who personally superintended his education and left in his will a large sum of money for his removal to Ohio and a good start in life. As the author more than once states, the free negro before the war was more or less of mulatto element. Small wonder then that they became the first leaders of the negro race of the generation immediately following freedom. The author fails to notice or note the rapid increase of leadership on the part of the unmixed negro under the stimulus of education and opportunity since the war.

Whether succeeding generations of the mulatto element maintain the vigor and aggressive spirit of the first-fruit of race intermixture constitutes an interesting thesis for some keen-minded social student who may have no better use to make of his time.

The case of the mulatto fails to prove the doctrine of the transmission of mental and moral quality. While it is true that the mulatto has more numerously risen to places of distinction, it does not appear in any instance that they have reached a higher level of renown than the pure black. Phyless Wheatly and Paul Lawrence Dunbar mark the highest literary genius of the African in America.

In organizing ability, W. W. Brown, author of the *The True Reformer*, laid the basis of subsequent negro enterprise. Granville T. Wood leads the race in inventive genius. Robert E. Elliot is conceded to be the ablest negro who had a seat in our federal Congress.

While it is true that no American negro or mulatto has reached the highest pinnacle of renown, this is no discredit or discouragement to their just aims and aspirations. The emergence of genius depends upon social opportunity and not upon inherent capacity. The white race of Mississippi has produced comparatively few illustrious names as compared with Massachusetts, although they justly lay claim to the same underlying racial capacity. Their environment has not been conducive to the emergence of genius or talent of the highest order. Neither negro nor mulatto has had the opportunity for the exhibition of transcending genius. For but half a century he has been playing in the back-yard of civilization. The few men of eminence who have risen under these circumstances are hopeful indications of what may be expected as the area of opportunity and privilege is enlarged.

The cause of the negro regardless of blood equation before the American people is one and inseparable. The cleavage which grew up

under slavery is rapidly dying away under the more enlightened policy of freedom.

The author is again fundamentally mistaken in presuming that the mulatto constitutes a self-continuing class without intermingling with the mother-parent group. If this contention were true, there would be no mixed blood less than one-half white.

On the other hand, the amount of white blood already injected in the negro race is not likely to be greatly increased by further fresh infusion. The rapid growth of the mulatto element as shown by the federal census is due to the wide diffusion of white blood already injected in the negro race.

The laws of a great majority of the states of the Union prohibit intermarriages between the races; this absolutely prevents legitimate mulatto offspring. The growing sense of self-respect and decency on the part of the black has checked almost to the point of stoppage the illegitimate progeny. Even where illicit relations between the races are indulged in, it is not likely to result in issue.

On account of the "sage femme" and the practice of race suicide, such issue arising from the process of the old-order complacent concubinage will not be prolific in the red-light district and city slums. The segregation of the races, making relationship less easy, tends to the same end.

As an illustration of the infrequency of the direct mulatto progeny, the student body of Howard University, about 1,500 in number, is composed largely of the mixed element. There are probably not a half-dozen children of white parents in this entire number. On the other hand, the first pupils in this institution a generation ago were very largely the offspring of such parentage. The ones who are of lightest hue and show closest physical similarity to the white race are known to be the legitimate children of a colored co-parency. Of the more than two million so-called mulattoes in the colored race, an overwhelming number, especially of the younger generation, are offspring of colored fathers and mothers. It is safe to say that they average about one-fourth of the full-blooded white men who have become absorbed in the colored race. This European blood cannot remain in any one compartment of the race but will tend to diffuse itself throughout the entire mass until it has assumed an approximate oneness in color and physical likeness. The process of diffusion will be facilitated by the well-known tendency of the male to mate with the female of lighter hue. There are comparatively few monochrome marriages within the negro race. The colored male

of all shades is prone to mate upward and the female downward on the chromatic scale. The poet Dunbar speaks of the swarthy maid with her swarthier swain as typical of this tendency.

The hundred thousand quadroons and the sixty-nine thousand octoroons together with numerous thousands of the nine hundred thousand mulattoes returned by the census of 1890 are crossing and are still likely to cross the great social divide and incorporate into the white race, in order to escape the lowest status of the despised fraction of their blood.

In some states a person with only one-eighth negro blood is given the legal status of white. The transition of the quadroon, octoroon, and lighter mulattoes will widen the physical margin between the two races. The male more easily crosses the social dead-line than the female. This gives a darker male a wider area for his well-known propensity to mate with a lighter female and will thus facilitate the rapid diffusion of white blood throughout the race.

Negro schools, especially in cities and towns, show few children of unadulterated negro type and very few of the other extreme which cannot be detected from white. Both extremes, however, are a rapidly diminishing quantity, while the average of the race is approaching a medium yellowish-brown rather than black. Under this tendency, within the next three or four generations, a pure negro will be hard to find outside of the black belts and remote rural regions of the South. Leadership within this group will be determined by those who evince the capacity and enterprise without reference to hue or complexion. The sociological problem of the mulatto is merely the sociological problem of the non-white element of our population.

This treatise bears the date of 1918, but was probably worked out before the world-war had injected a new spirit in the human race. This titanic struggle has given tremendous impulse toward the universal sanction of common standards, aims, and ideals.

The great vice of American slavery was that it strove to identify the color line with the cultural level. This is the crowning evil of the prevailing method of dealing with the race question today. The dominant word of civilization today is that culture, and not color shall constitute the world-standard. Japan has put the world on warning that there must be no race or color line in the relationship of men. The Germanic element of the Peace Congress, who had just united to overthrow a logical embodiment of racial arrogance in the German nation, defeated, for the time being, the acceptance of Japan's proposition. A

distinguished senator bases his objection to the League of Nations upon the ground that the majority of its constituent members are not disposed to obliterate the color line on the world's affairs.

The human race is moving rapidly toward the adoption of universal laws, which, like the laws of science, admit of no ethnic deviation. There never can be peace and good-will on earth or in any part of it where the color line prevails. It is the author's misfortune that the appearance of this treatise might not have been delayed until he had time to reshape it in harmony with the new democratic ideas. As long as men take counsel of color rather than of conscience, there will be turmoil and confusion in the world.

A biological civilization can only be local and temporary. The equilibrium of the world must be based on the universally acknowledged and accepted scientific ethnical, social, and spiritual laws, not subject to variation to meet the pride and arrogance of men. Those who argue otherwise tend to frustrate the fulfilment of the universal longing of the human heart for peace on earth and good-will toward men.

Those who profess Christianity as the world-wide religion and yet justify the operation of a color line disprove and discredit their pretension. If Christianity is to be a biological religion, it cannot be universal. The ideal of Christianity is that all of its devotees, regardless of ethnic deviation, are baptised in one spirit. Spiritual kinship transcends all other relations among men. Unless Christianity can overcome the color line, the universality of its claim will be discredited, and the world must still repeat the query propounded by the rugged teacher of righteousness to his august relative and rival.

"Art thou he that should come or do we look for another?"

KELLY MILLER

HOWARD UNIVERSITY
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Cultural Reality. By FLORIAN ZNANIECKI, PH.D., Lecturer in Political History and Institutions in the University of Chicago. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1919. $2.50 net, postage extra.

In these days of impressionism and half-baked generalizations it is a rare treat to come across a book like this, with its splendid mastery of materials and its closely knit argument. Unfortunately we can here give only the briefest summary.

Empirical reality consists of individual interests as actualized in individual experience, but also as transactual in the sense of being the